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AHPI challenges Delhi Govtâ??s order on ICU beds reservation

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This order was challenged by AHPI in the Delhi High Court and was stayed on 22nd September



Government of Delhi issued an order on September 12, 2020, asking 33-premier hospitals to reserve 80 per cent of their ICU beds for COVID patients. This order was not only arbitrary but created serious problems in these hospitals as non-COVID patients, who had been waiting for long for their elective procedures had started coming for treatment and at the time of this order, more than 50 per cent of ICU beds in general were occupied with non-COVID patients.

The other problem faced by these hospitals was how to separate 80 per cent beds from the rest 20 per cent. Commenting on the dilemma faced by these hospitals, Dr Girdhar Gyani, Director General, Association of Healthcare Providers (India) (AHPI) says, “To give you an example, if an ICU with 40-beds, has to keep 32-beds for COVID, then how do we isolate the balance 8-beds for non-COVID patients. This would mean that virtually all 40-beds would be used for COVID patients.”

This order was challenged by AHPI in the Delhi High Court and was stayed on September 22. The Delhi Govt approached a Double Bench of Delhi-HC but it was stayed there too. The Delhi government then approached the SC and there too, it was referred to the Double Bench of Delhi HC. By this time number of cases had increased and the HC, on November 12, vacated the stay till November 26, 2020.

Dr Gyani further added, “The government has ordered 90-private hospitals to reserve 60 per cent of their total beds as COVID beds. This is going to create a very serious situation for non-COVID patients, resulting in likely increase in morbidity and mortality of such patients. Unfortunately, fatalities due to non-COVID cases will not come on record.”

Elaborating on what could prove to be a viable a solution to the issue, Dr Gyani says, “It is time that government introspects and enters into a dialogue with the private sector and finds amicable solutions to earmark dedicated COVID hospitals/ wards and at the same time keeps beds for life threatening ailments like heart attack, stroke, kidney/ liver transplant, cancer etc.